

Notes of the Allotment Site Secretaries Meeting

Tuesday 25th May 2021

Via Microsoft Teams

ITEM		ACTION
	Present: Judy Clark (Bembrook) John Funnell (Choice) Andrew Colquhoun (Lower Torfield) Colin Blackman (BOS Field) Jill Kaye (Marina) Claire Humm (Fernbank) Nick Wates (Lower Cornwallis) Holly Clamp (Lower Clive Vale) Terry Drinkwater (HBC) Clive Read (HBC) Marian Hollingsworth (HBC)	
	Terry Drinkwater, Parks and Open Spaces Manager acting as Chair introduced everyone to the meeting. He informed that he has now taken over allotments in the borough as well as his role of parks manager. He is keen to review all allotment sites and make changes in the way forward.	
	Apologies for Absence and non attendance Lynda Murray (Collier Road), Cllr Maya Evans, Richard Harrison (Lower Torfield), Dianne Huggins (Downs Road), Jack Tomlin (Lower Cornwallis), Neil McKinnon (Pauls Field), Caroline Alpine Sills (Choice), Sue DeHaviland (Choice), Andrew Johnson (Tivoli)	
1.	Minutes of the last meeting held on 30th January 2020 Matters Arising: <i>Pauls Field Compost Toilet: Following changes with the council's minor works contractors and covid restrictions, this had been put on hold.</i> <i>Tenancy Situation: Collier Road allotment waiting list remains closed as there has been little movement on site of people vacating.</i> <i>Lower Cornwallis allotment: The steps work was planned but due to covid, it prevented TCV volunteers from returning last year.</i>	

	<p><i>Padlock: the lower gate padlock was checked and repaired.</i></p> <p><i>Trees: Tree works completed at Lower Cornwallis and Fernbank in November 2020.</i></p> <p><i>BOS Field Allotment: Plots 40B, 44B and 47. CR met representatives on site to discuss the long term waterlogging issue from a natural spring. Agreed there is no easy solution i.e. a French drain to a soakaway but there are no funds for this. Some imagination with water loving planting would be best.</i></p> <p>The Notes were agreed as read</p>	All
2.	<p>Expenditure Progress Report 2020-2021</p> <p>Allotment Revenue report circulated to Site Secretaries. The majority of which has been completed.</p>	Note
3.	<p>Condition Survey</p> <p>The Condition Survey report was circulated to Site Secretaries. Most of the items have been carried out. CR continues to work on this. The fence at Lower Cornwallis was brought forward to this year.</p> <p>JC asked with regard to the shed that is on Bembrook if it would be included in our survey. CR confirmed that it wasn't included. He also advised that structures on other sites are funded by grants. We could review this particular shed if it needs repairing. JC informed that there was nothing wrong with the shed at the moment. AC also informed that there is a shed at Lower Torfield – again this is not included in the survey.</p> <p>TD – advised that as we as landlords, need to address structures on our land and include them in future checks.</p>	TD/CR
4.	<p>Tree Programme</p> <p>5 year programme report circulated to Site Secretaries. Tree works completed at Lower Cornwallis and Fernbank. A site inspection with respective Site Secretaries will be carried out to agree works to trees this year at Choice, Collier Road and Tivoli in the summer. Works order will be raised in the autumn.</p>	CR
5.	<p>Security on Sites</p> <p>Several sites broken into over the past few weeks. Some repairs made where they got in. i.e. Lower Torfield.</p>	

	<p>All break ins should be reported on the Police website where individual loss or damage suffered. This helps when HBC Community Safety Officer meets with the police.</p> <p>Choice allotment had a visit from the police following their break in but as there was no evidence, no action taken. The PCSO offered to put forward an application for a grant of £500 from the police.</p> <p>TD informed that vandalism has increased over the past couple of months not just on allotments sites but on other park areas amounting to £40K.</p> <p>TD, Site fencing will be reviewed in light of these break ins, we have already started to improve fencing at lower Cornwallis site.</p> <p>JF offered voluntary help as part of a partnership working alongside contractors to assist in tidying up allotment sites.</p> <p>JC commented whether someone could inform all other sites that there has been a break in.</p> <p>TD commented that one of his aspirations is on how we share information. It would be good practice to have a central repository where information can be posted and accessed by plot holders. TD to investigate</p> <p>AC suggested that maybe Site Secretaries themselves to inform other sites of break ins by email.</p>	TD
6.	<p>Use of Glyphosate and Creocote</p> <p>JC received concerns from tenants with regard to the use of glyphosate and creocote and described their composition. Both legal to use but does have an environmental impact. JC would like to see both banned as don't have to be used. A specific clause should be put into the Allotment Rules requesting plot holders not to use.</p> <p>TD informed that from a council's perspective degradable products are best. Glyphosate is only used on Japanese Knotweed. Enforcement should be part of a discussion with Site Secretaries.</p> <p>Local councillors are petitioning ESCC with regarding to the use of herbicide on the highways. It is a question of changing their policy and use of alternatives.</p> <p>CH commented in defence of ESCC where they spray in the road, if you ask operative not to spray, they are agreeable.</p>	TD

7.	<p>Badgers</p> <p>AC circulated a document on the concerns of badgers to all Site Secretaries prior to the meeting for discussion. The number of badgers has increased, and the damage associated with them particularly on the eastern side of the borough.</p> <p>It was suggested in the document that means of deterring access for the badgers and the non feeding of them could be discussed.</p> <p>TD – Some of the issues of badger access have been caused by the poor condition of our boundary fencing at some sites. It is proposed that HBC would review their boundary fencing and that repairs and replacement can be undertaken as resources allow. This may help in securing the sites.</p> <p>JC said English Nature did have some leaflets but nowhere to share this information.</p>	
8.	<p>Creation of new allotment sites</p> <p>Given the numbers on the Tenancy Table, Site Secretaries keen for provision for more space.</p> <p>People on the waiting list prefer to choose the site that they have requested to join.</p> <p>TD informed that Cllr Evans is keen to consider more allotment provision.</p> <p>HC informed that there was an allotment community group set up by Cllr Judy Rogers.</p> <p>Upper Clive Vale, this site was taken out of use many years ago. There was no uptake at that particular time.</p> <p>Site Secretaries would like to see more enforcement on tenants not working their plots. Some long term tenants do a bit to satisfy the Notice issued, and then do no more until the next site visit.</p> <p>Many plots not worked last year because of the covid pandemic. Inspections were carried out in June last year but rather than send a Notice, the council took a more gentle approach and wrote to tenants where no work was noted.</p> <p>Sites were again visited in November and Notices were issued. As a result 14 plots became available for let. Other plots that were voluntarily vacated earlier this year have also been relet.</p>	

	<p>JK: Marina informed that they have 112 on their waiting list and carried out a full site inspection recently and took a more lenient approach to plot holders not working their plots.</p> <p>Rubbish and structures left by previous plot holders is also an issue on all allotment sites.</p> <p>TD suggested that clear up days on sites would help subject to funds , HBC maybe could provide a skip, volunteers could help clear problem waste from sites.</p> <p>TD said that where we've had austerity previously on allotment sites, more resources would be needed to improve site conditions. TD would seek to secure further resources where possible.</p>	TD/JF
9.	<p>Tenancy Situation</p> <p>Tenancy Situation table circulated to Site Secretaries, the number of people waiting has increased since the last table.</p>	Note
10.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>NW – strongly supports Terry Drinkwater aspirations and ideas for change on allotments.</p> <p>HC – informed that Lower Clive Vale has a Whatsapp group page and facebook and finds it really helpful to communicate with the tenants on her site.</p> <p>TD keen to explore ways of communicating and sharing information and sees this as a priority.</p>	TD/as above
11.	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>TD suggested January 2022 and hopefully by this time it will be face to face.</p> <p>Some Site Secretaries not able to have meetings during the day and would prefer to have them at 6pm.</p> <p>TD will need to check with Cllr Evans.</p> <p>AC suggested that we have a meeting late autumn following TD's visits to all allotment sites and be able to consult with Site Secretaries of the changes that he plans to make. To be considered.</p>	MH TD